

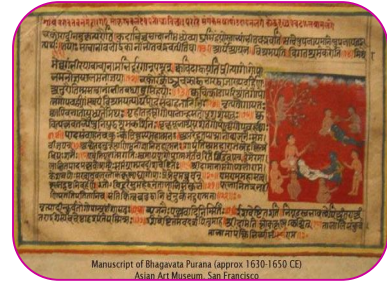


A RARE PAINTED MANUSCRIPT OF 'SHRIMADBHAGVATA' PURANA

Mansi Khati¹ and Radhesh R. Kulkarni²

¹Research Student at Deccan College Post-graduate and Research Institute, Pune.

²Associate Professor at Bhardiya Sanskriti Darshan Trust's Ayurvedic College, Wagholi, Pune.



Manuscript of Bhagavata Purana (approx. 1630-1650 CE)
Asian Art Museum, San Francisco

INTRODUCTION :

Indian manuscripts are important in context of knowledge and its composition as they were the mirror of ancient society. We have evidences of manuscripts in various materials i.e. from stone to paper. And Indian subcontinent have ample collection or pictured manuscripts in various museums which are rare. These manuscripts composed very beautifully according to the text and picture. Evidence of many such painted manuscripts found in Sanskrit literature. The Sanskrit literature and paintings both on manuscript are equally enriched on their respective platform. Here in Indian subcontinent the tradition of manuscripts was old enough and continued till now in some parts of India. The paper based on 10th Skandha as well as throw light on some of the aspect of paintings of the rare manuscript of 'Bhagvata Purana'.

INFORMATION OF BHAGVATA PURANA¹

The time period of Bhagvata Purana were gone back to the 7th Cen. B.C., it has twelve skandhas. From these 12 skandhas the 10th one is more important and famous too. It has a detailed description of the 'Leela's' of god Shrikrishna. This skandha is divided in two parts 1) Purvardha i.e. earlier part or beginning part. This part describes the story of Shrikrishna i.e. his birth or took an incarnation in human form, description of Mathura, his childhood, and left Vrindavana and Gopis etc. and 2) Uttardha i.e. later part describes the killing of Jarasandha to the end of incarnation.

DESCRIPTION OF THE 10TH SKANDHA OF BHAGVATA PURANA²

Vaidik Samshodhana Mandala, Pune has manuscripts number 14031 mentioned for the Bhagvata Purana. This manuscript bought from Eknath Joshi in 1989 A.D. by Vaidik Samshodhana Mandala, Pune. The condition of this manuscript was deteriorated so it was laminated for the preservation purpose. In 10th skandha, total of 131 adhyaya have 105 paintings (illustrations). The

¹पुराण विमर्श - बलदेव उपाध्याय- चौखंबा प्रकाशन- वाराणसी २०१०पान.क्र ५४७

²Bhagavat puran 10th Skandha - manuscripts number 14031 Vaidik Samshodhana Mandala, Pune

measures of these pictures are 46x17x7 inch. The language used for writing this manuscript is Sanskrit and the script is Devnagari. The handwriting in the manuscript is very beautiful and two inks viz., black and red were used for writing whereas it was written on handmade paper. The name of writer of this manuscript was Pathak Yoshre belongs to shaka era 1666.

DESCRIPTION OF PAINTINGS³

1) 1st Adhyaya- 68 shlokas- painting on 6th folio

कथितो वंशविस्तारो भवता सोमसूर्ययोः। राज्ञा चोभयवंश्यानां चरित्रं परमाद्भुतम्॥.....

उग्रसेनं च पितरं यद्भोजान्धकाधिपम्। स्वयं निगृह्य क्षुजे शुरसेनात्महाबलः॥६८॥

इति श्रीमद्भागवते महापुराणे दशमस्कन्धे पूर्वार्धे श्रीकृष्णावतारोपक्रमे प्रथमोऽध्यायः॥१॥

Description: It's a dialogue between king Parikshit and the sage Shukracharya in which the king asked Shukracharya "Hey sage, as you told me the stories of mighty kings of Chandivanshi (moon devotee clan) and Suyavanshi (Sun devotee clan) families, their character and the story of Yadu. So in the clan of Yadu, god Vishnu took birth as his 9th incarnation. Please tell me that story." This story contains the marriage of Vasudev and Devaki, peaching of Vasudeva to Kamsa, incarnation of Vishnu in the form of their son Krishna etc.(Bhagvat 22)

Description of Painting: the colour composition of painting is very attractive and beautiful. The king, his palace, the chamara on king's head composed and treated appropriately according to their status. The headgear of the king influenced from Muslim rulers. The overall treatment shows the impact of contemporary society.

2) 2nd Adhyaya- 42 shlokas- painting on 10^b folio⁴

प्रलम्बकचाणूरतृणावर्तमहाशनैः। मुष्टिकारिष्टद्विदपूतनाकेशिधेनुकैः॥१॥.....

इभिष्टुय पुरुषं यद्द्रुपमनिदं यथा। ब्रम्हेशानौ पुरोधाय देवाः प्रतिययुर्दिवम्॥२॥

इति श्रीमद्भागवते महापुराणे दशमस्कन्धे पूर्वार्धे गर्भगतविष्णोर्ब्रम्हादिकृतस्तुतिर्नाम द्वितीः अध्यायः॥२॥

Description: The story of lord Vishnu as Shrikrishna, born as Devaki's son. Brahma, Shiva prayed her and said "for well-being of all the Universe, the god will be born as your son. The destroyer of Kamsa will grow in your womb, who will be the saviour of Yadava clan in future." (Bhagvata 37)

Description of Painting: Devaki is an important character of this painting hence more focus was given to her in it. Brahma depicted as standing in front of Devaki and other gods followed Brahma. Devaki is shown pregnant, so she is depicted with a swollen belly.

³भारतीय कलेचा इतिहास, शहाणे १९९०पान.क्र ७५

⁴"MARATHA ARCHITECTURE" (1650AD to1850AD) by M.S.Mate page 25

3) 3rd Adhyaya- 53 shloka- painting on 15th folio⁵

अथ सर्वगुणोपेतः कालः परमशोभनः। यर्ह्यैवाजन्मर्क्षं शान्तक्षग्रहत्तारकम्॥ १॥
 यशोदा नन्दपत्नी च जातं परम्बुध्यत॥ न तल्लिङ्गं परिश्रान्ता निद्रयापगतस्मृतिः॥ ३॥
 इति श्रीमद्भागवतेमहापुराणे दशमस्कन्दे पूर्वार्धे कृष्णजन्मनि तृतीयोऽध्यायः॥ ३॥

Description: This part contains story of Vasudeva and Devaki praises Shrikrishna, his birth, crossing of river Yamuna with father Vasudeva and kept the god at Gokula next to the Yashoda, and coming back with Yashoda's new-born daughter in jail. (Bhagvat 57)

Description of Painting: The god Shrikrishna was playing next to his mother. Vasudeva and Krishna were crossing the river Yamuna whereas Krishna kept in a basket. Yamuna flows fiercely due to heavy floods, it indicates the season of rains. Due to heavy rain the animals also feared, it was also depicted in the painting.

4) 11th Adhyaya- 56 shloka- painting on 34th folio⁶

गोपा नन्दादयः श्रुत्वा द्रुमयोः पततो रवम्। तत्राजग्मुः कुरुश्रेष्ठ निर्यातभयशक्तिताः॥ १॥
 एवं विहारैः कौमारैः कौमारं जहतुर्व्रजे। निलायनैः सेतुबन्धैर्कटोत्पलवनादिभिः॥ ५६॥
 इति श्रीमद्भागवतेमहापुराणे दशमस्कन्दे पूर्वार्धे वत्सबकवधोनामैकादशोऽध्यायः॥ ११॥

Description: The story depicts that Shrikrishna drinks water after feeding his cattle's, then a demon appeared there in the form of Crane and inhaled Krishna. Other friends of him feared to see this but due to strong luminosity of the god, the demon didn't sustain that much power, so he vomit back Krishna and started teasing the god with his sharp beak. So Krishnatorn him in two.(Bhagvat 167)

Description of Painting: Story depicted very nicely in this painting. It's like a continuous narration of three paintings in one; as firstly cattle herds and Krishna both were standing in water to drink it. Secondly, the demon caught and inhaled him and again vomited. And thirdly demon teasing Krishna with his sharp beak. Krishna portrayed with four hands and the demon and Shrikrishna both depicted bigger than other characters as the story concentrated on them.

5) 25th Adhyaya- 33 shloka- painting on 79.ath folio⁷

इन्द्रस्तदात्मनः पूजां विज्ञाय विहर्ता नृपा गोपेभ्यः कृष्णनाथेभ्यो नन्दादिभ्यश्चुकोप सः॥ १॥
 ततोऽनुरक्तैः पशुपैः परिश्रितो राजन्स गोष्ठं सबलोऽब्रजद्धरिः।
 तथा विधान्यस्य कृतानि गोपिका गायन्त्य ईयुर्मुदिता हृदिस्पृशः॥ ३॥
 इति श्रीमद्भागवतेमहापुराणे दशमस्कन्दे पूर्वार्धे पञ्चविंशोऽध्यायः॥ २५॥

Description: Shrikrishna offering sacrifice to the mountain Govardhana and Indra the king of all Gods got angry due to this. So to destroy the Gokula, he ordered clouds to rain heavily, fiercely. To

⁵NASHIK RANGAMALA' by M.S.Mate & Usha Rande

⁶'Paintings from the Bhagavat purana' on B.I.S manadala by M.S.Mate & Usha Rande

⁷NASHIK RANGAMALA' by M.S.Mate & Usha Rande page no 36

save the living beings of Gokula Shrikrishna uplift the mountain on his small finger and all living beings of Gokula took hoist under that uplifted mountain.(Bhagvat 381)

Description of Painting: Three depiction in one painting. 1st shows the anger of Indra, heavy rains and feared cattle running to and fro to take shelter from the rain. Important part of the story is the uplifting of the mountain Govardhana by the god and the people took shelter under the uplifted mountain and praising god, which is prominently depicted.

SUMMARY:

After studying the paintings we understand that

- 1) The depiction of story in painting is equal to 100 shlokas. Artist portrayed the story very attractively.
- 2) The placing of painting in Bhagvata Purana was at the ending of adhyaya, so that one can understand the painting more deeply, more accurately.
- 3) The completion of the Bhagavata Purana was note in the 1666 A.D. hence it shows the impact of Maratha-Mughal styles in paintings.
- 4) The writing work of Bhagvata Purana finished earlier is the initial stage and then in the later stage the painting work done for the beautification of the manuscript.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- श्रीमद्भागवतपुराण - manuscripts number 14031 Vaidik Samshodhana Mandala, Pune
- भारतीय कलेचा इतिहास, शहाणे १९९०
- पुराण विमर्श - बलदेव उपाध्याय- चौखंबा प्रकाशन- वाराणसी २०१०
- Bulletin of Deccan College Research Institute. Poona 1963
- 'Paintings from the Bhagavat purana' on B.I.S manadala by M.S.Mate & Usha Rande – Bharat Itihas Sanshodhan Mandala ,pune 1979
- 'NASHIK RANGAMALA' by M.S.Mate & Usha Rande -Deccan College Research Institute. Poona 1982
- "MARATHA ARCHITECTURE"(1650AD to1850AD) by M.S.Mate
- Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts -Vaidik Samshodhana Mandala, Pune